

JANUARY 2007

ARLINGTON PREPARES

# EMERGENCY GUIDE



BE INFORMED

MAKE A PLAN

GET INVOLVED

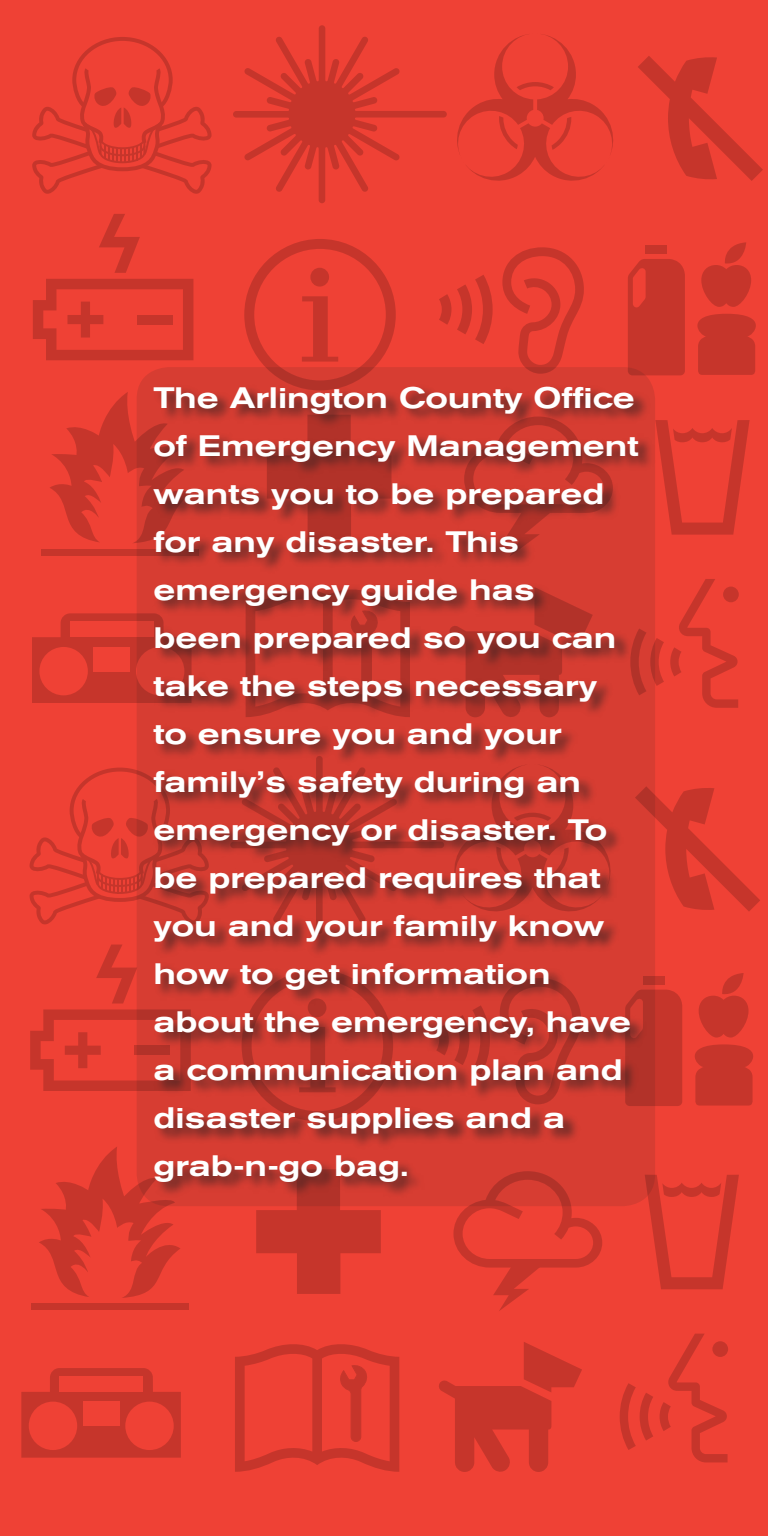
**Arlington County  
Office of Emergency Management**

**[www.arlingtonva.us](http://www.arlingtonva.us)**

**1700<sup>A</sup>M**  
**ARLINGTON**



ARLINGTON COUNTY  
*citizen*  *corps*

The background is a solid red color with a collage of white icons. The icons include: a skull and crossbones, a sunburst, a biohazard symbol, a crossed-out telephone, a battery with a lightning bolt, an information 'i' in a circle, a speaker, a gas can, a person with an apple, a fire, a first aid cross, a cloud with a lightning bolt, a trash can, a boombox, an open book with a wrench, a dog, and a person with a speech bubble. The text is centered in a white box with a drop shadow.

**The Arlington County Office  
of Emergency Management  
wants you to be prepared  
for any disaster. This  
emergency guide has  
been prepared so you can  
take the steps necessary  
to ensure you and your  
family's safety during an  
emergency or disaster. To  
be prepared requires that  
you and your family know  
how to get information  
about the emergency, have  
a communication plan and  
disaster supplies and a  
grab-n-go bag.**

**The steps are easy:**

**Be Informed, Make a Plan,**

**Prepare a Disaster**

**Supply Kit, Get Involved**

## BE INFORMED

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**N**o one knows where or when a disaster may strike. Most disasters strike quickly and without warning. They can force people to remain where they are or to evacuate. They can interrupt or even stop basic services such as electricity, gas, water, and telephone. Arlington County faces many threats. In the past several years, our community has responded to terrorism, major storms, hurricanes and power outages. Arlington County encourages you to take an “all-hazards” approach to your personal preparedness plans. Through this approach, you can make general preparations that will help you in any emergency.

In an emergency, although Arlington County officials and relief workers will be on the scene, the County staff may not be able to reach everyone right away. Therefore, it is important for you to know how to get information about the emergency, have an emergency plan that is written and practiced at home, and to have your necessary supplies in one place in case you have to Shelter-in-Place or evacuate.

For more information and/or if you have any questions about the content in this publication, please visit the “Frequently Asked Questions” section on the web site at: [www.arlingtonva.us/oem](http://www.arlingtonva.us/oem).



## HERE ARE SOME EASY STEPS TO FOLLOW:

### Step 1: Know How to Get Information in an Emergency

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There are several ways to get information about emergencies in Arlington.

1. **Sign up for Arlington Alert.** In Arlington County, a fast way to find out about an emergency is to register for Arlington Alert, a free service that can provide emergency notification to you by email, pager, or text message on your cell phone. You can sign up for Arlington Alert at [www.arlingtonalert.com](http://www.arlingtonalert.com).
2. **Tune into 1700AM Arlington radio**, Arlington's emergency radio network
3. **Tune into the local broadcast TV and radio** media
4. Visit the County's web site at [www.arlingtonva.us](http://www.arlingtonva.us)
5. Tune into Arlington's Cable TV **Channel 74**



# MAKE A PLAN

## Step 2: Make a Plan

Meet with family members and/or those people who live with you to discuss the importance of preparation and how each person will communicate with the others in an emergency. The following may help as you prepare your plan:

- **Choose two places to meet in case you have to leave your home.** One location should be right outside your home (maybe across the street), in case of a short-term emergency, and the second location should be away from your neighborhood, (maybe at a friend's house), in case you cannot get home or you have to leave the neighborhood.
- **Identify the best ways to escape from every room in your home.** Make sure every person knows how to escape if there is an emergency.
- **Have an emergency contact person who lives out of state.** This is important so each person who lives with you can call to report in and check on the whereabouts of everyone in the household.
- **Give everyone who lives with you a “Make a Plan” card** with the location of your local emergency meeting place and the location, address and phone number of the meeting place outside your neighborhood. Also include the name and phone number(s) of your emergency contact. For a “Make a Plan” card, visit [www.makeaplan.org](http://www.makeaplan.org) or call the Arlington County Office of Emergency Management at 703-228-3314.
- **If you have pets,** identify places that will take your pet and be able to care for them if you have to evacuate your home. There is additional information in this brochure about preparing your pets for emergencies. (See Page 4).



### Step 3: Complete This Checklist

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- ☐ Post emergency phone numbers near every telephone.
- ☐ Teach children how and when to call 9-1-1.
- ☐ Install smoke detectors on every level of your home.
- ☐ Practice your emergency plan with everyone in the household,
- ☐ Determine which are the safest places in your home for sheltering-in-place.
- ☐ Tell every household resident how and when to turn off the water, gas and electricity, at the main switches. (Never turn the gas back on. Call the gas company.)
- ☐ Conduct a home hazard hunt and change the set-up or location of items that could cause injury in an emergency situation, especially if the power goes out.
- ☐ Assemble disaster supply kits and Go Bags.
- ☐ Teach every household resident how to use the fire extinguisher.
- ☐ Be sure you have adequate insurance coverage.
- ☐ Take a First Aid/CPR Course.
- ☐ Make sure you have a plan for your pets if you must evacuate your home.
- ☐ Keep at least one working fire extinguisher in your home and make sure family members know where it is and how to use it.



## Step 4: Practice and Maintain Your Emergency Plan

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- Practice your plan monthly. Review your plan every six months.
- Test smoke detectors monthly and change batteries twice a year.
- Replace stored water every three months and stored food every year or by the date on the packaging.
- Test and recharge your fire extinguisher according to the manufacturer's instructions.
- Test batteries in flashlights and radios every three months.
- Check the expiration dates on food and medications in your disaster supply kit and go bags twice a year.



## PREPARE A DISASTER SUPPLY KIT

### Step 5: Assemble Your Disaster Supply Kits and Go Bags

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Disaster supply kits and Go Bags contain items most likely to be needed if staying in a specific location for an extended period of time or if you must evacuate your home. Supplies should be kept in water-resistant containers and stored in locations pre-determined as the safest places to be if disaster strikes. Go Bags should contain items that you will need if you have to evacuate your location.

Arlington County recommends every household keep a three to ten-day supply of items in their kits for each member of the household. You will need more if you have children and/or pets.

You may want to have a kit in the following locations:

- **Home Kit – Keep near locations in your home where you would Shelter-in-Place.**
- **Office Kit – Keep in a place that is easy to access quickly.**
- **Car Kit – Keep in the trunk.**
- **Go Kit – Keep by the door of your home so you can grab it and go.**

## Use the following as a guide for preparing your kits.

### Have these basics with you wherever you might need to shelter for the short term

- ☐ Water – carry a plastic bottle
- ☐ Contact list – family and doctors
- ☐ Food – nonperishable energy snacks
- ☐ Basic first aid kit & manual
- ☐ Flashlight & batteries or glow sticks
- ☐ Maps of surrounding area
- ☐ Dust mask
- ☐ Paper and pen
- ☐ Whistle
- ☐ Non-latex and latex gloves
- ☐ Radio and batteries
- ☐ Facial Tissues
- ☐ Antibacterial wipes or hand sanitizer
- ☐ Special needs list – Prescriptions (meds, eye glasses, etc.)

### Keep a small bag of personal items to be ready to stay or go with little or no notice

- ☐ Prescriptions, other basic medicines
- ☐ Personal hygiene items
- ☐ Extra keys – house and car
- ☐ Financial papers - copies
- ☐ Pet's vet records and pictures
- ☐ Cash
- ☐ Cell phone charger/s
- ☐ Copies of family documents
- ☐ Spare glasses/other special needs

### Keep these supplies ready for both sheltering-in-place or evacuation

- ☐ Water for 3- 5 days: 1gallon/person/day, plus more for pets
- ☐ Blankets and bedding
- ☐ Food for 3 days - 2 weeks
- ☐ Tools, duct tape
- ☐ First Aid supplies
- ☐ Garbage bags
- ☐ Battery operated radio and batteries
- ☐ Personal hygiene supplies
- ☐ Special needs for family members
- ☐ Battery lanterns and batteries
- ☐ Extra sets of clothes, shoes, raingear
- ☐ Pet carriers, food, litter, bags, water

**For more emergency preparedness information, visit [www.arlingtonva.us](http://www.arlingtonva.us) or call 703-228-7935**

# IMPORTANT PHONE NUMBERS

Keep important numbers handy in case of emergency.

Make sure all household members know where to find these numbers.

Contact 1 \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Other Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Contact 2 \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Other Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

Family 1 \_\_\_\_\_

Phone/cell \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

Family 2 \_\_\_\_\_

Phone/Cell \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

Doctors \_\_\_\_\_

Vet \_\_\_\_\_

Caregivers or other support \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

Meeting Sites: \_\_\_\_\_

In Neighborhood/ Outside Home \_\_\_\_\_

Outside of Neighborhood \_\_\_\_\_

Best Route \_\_\_\_\_

# PHONE



Police/Fire Emergency	911 (voice and TTY)
Police/Fire Non-emergency	703-558-2222 (voice and TTY)
Poison Center	202-625-3333, TTY 202-362-8563
General Information	703-228-3000, TTY 703-228-4610
Public Health	703-228-5580, TTY 703-228-1398
Human Services	703-228-1300, TTY 703-228-1398
Animal Shelter	703-931-9241, TTY 711
School Hotline	703-228-8638, TTY 703-228-6178
School Information	703-228-6005, TTY 703-228-6179
Electricity – Dominion VA Power	1-888-667-3000 1-800-552-4015, TTY 711
Gas – Washington Gas	703-750-1400, or 1-800-752-7520, TTY 711
Telephone – Verizon Virginia	1-800-483-1000, TTY 711
Water	703-228-6570

# INTERNET

Arlington County	<a href="http://www.arlingtonva.us">www.arlingtonva.us</a>
Arlington Alert	<a href="http://www.arlingtonalert.com">www.arlingtonalert.com</a>
Arlington Public Schools	<a href="http://www.arlington.k12.va.us">www.arlington.k12.va.us</a>
Department of Homeland Security	<a href="http://www.ready.gov">www.ready.gov</a>
Make a Plan Card	<a href="http://www.makeaplan.org">www.makeaplan.org</a>



## PROTECTING OUR PETS IN THE EVENT OF A DISASTER

### Prepare . . . before it happens

- Make sure your animals are wearing collars with securely fastened up-to-date identification. Ask your vet about microchipping your pets– it's an excellent way to assure that they make it safely back to you. The Animal Welfare League of Arlington (AWLA) provides this identification several times a year. Call 703-931-9241 for more information. Birds can be identified by photographs and leg bands.
- Identify a safe location to bring your pet– a pet-friendly hotel, a shelter that accepts animals, or a friend's home–so you know where to take them in the event of a disaster. Arlington County will provide a shelter for pets should the need arise. **DO NOT** leave pets at home if you evacuate your house.
- In the event you can't get back to your house, arrange for a trusted friend or neighbor to retrieve or care for your animals. This person should have a key, be comfortable with your pets, and know where your pet's disaster supply kit is kept.

### Essentials . . .Create a disaster kit (before the storm)

#### Include:

- ☐ Up-to-date medications and vaccination history
- ☐ Medical records and an information sheet on special needs/feeding and exercise regimens for the boarding facility or shelter
- ☐ Veterinarian's phone number
- ☐ Properly-sized carriers for transporting and housing (especially if evacuation to a pet-friendly shelter is necessary)

- ☐ Sturdy leash      ☐ Food and potable water and bowls
- ☐ Pet first aid kit      ☐ Plastic bags      ☐ Cat litter/pan
- ☐ Can opener      ☐ Muzzle      ☐ Pet toys and beds
- ☐ Current photo(s) of your pets in case they get lost
- ☐ Out-of-state phone number of a friend or relative to contact  
should your home phone be out of service

### **Take your animals with you!**

Leaving pets behind can result in their injury, loss, or death. Always take your pets with you! If they cannot stay with you during an evacuation, take them to a prearranged shelter out of the evacuation area.

### **After An Event...**

- Walk pets on a leash until they become re-oriented to their home  
– often familiar scents and landmarks may be altered and pets could easily be confused and get lost. Also, downed power lines and other debris can all pose a threat to animals after a disaster.
- If pets cannot be found after a disaster, contact the local animal control office to find out where lost animals can be recovered. Bring along a picture of your pet if possible. When safe to return home, post your pet's picture in the neighborhood.
- After a disaster animals can become aggressive or defensive  
– monitor their behavior. If you see an injured or stranded wild animal, do not attempt to help them. Call your animal control officer.

For more information on caring for your pet in a disaster go to:

[www.arlingtonva.us](http://www.arlingtonva.us)

[www.awla.org](http://www.awla.org)

[www.fema.gov/library/anemer.shtm](http://www.fema.gov/library/anemer.shtm)

[www.petswelcome.com](http://www.petswelcome.com)

[www.hsus.org](http://www.hsus.org)



## GET INVOLVED:

There are many ways to assist your community in an emergency.

- **Become a Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) member**

Arlington County CERT members complete a minimum of 28 hours of training that enhances their ability to recognize, respond to and recover from a major emergency or disaster. The training is provided under the guidance and sponsorship of the Office of Emergency Management and the instructors are Arlington County first responders. Topics covered in the training include disaster preparedness, basic disaster medical operations, light search and rescue, and team organization and management. Those who complete the training – and meet eligibility requirements to remain active – are assigned to neighborhood-based teams that meet regularly to refresh skills.

The eight-week CERT course is offered throughout the year. For additional information, visit [www.arlingtonva.us](http://www.arlingtonva.us) or email [arlingtonCERT@aol.com](mailto:arlingtonCERT@aol.com)

- **Become a Medical Reserve Corps (MRC) Volunteer**

The Arlington County Public Health Division recruits and trains current or retired volunteer physicians, dentists, veterinarians, pharmacists, nurses, and others with relevant skills to help in emergencies. Members of the Medical Reserve Corps may assist in mass dispensing clinics, help with epidemiologic investigations, respond to telephone inquiries, or assist with public outreach and education. The Medical Reserve Corps also welcomes volunteers with skills and experience in organizational support and development.

Training is offered on a regular basis. For more information, visit [www.arlingtonva.us](http://www.arlingtonva.us).

## • Become a Volunteer Emergency Support Team (VEST) member

The Volunteer Emergency Support Team (VEST) is a group of citizen volunteers who assist Arlington County in making effective use of unaffiliated, "spontaneous" volunteers in the wake of a community disaster. VEST members may be asked to provide assistance in the Volunteer Office, on the County Emergency Hotline, and in Volunteer Reception Centers. For more information, visit [www.arlingtonva.us](http://www.arlingtonva.us)

## • Be a Good Neighbor

Check on those in your neighborhood who may need help in developing their emergency plans or who may be elderly or in need of additional assistance during an emergency.



# SHELTER-IN-PLACE

**1700<sup>AM</sup>** In many emergencies it may be safer to stay indoors. If you are not in immediate danger, stay where you are, then get more information from Arlington Alert, local media or Arlington County's web site, [www.arlingtonva.us](http://www.arlingtonva.us). This practice is referred to as Shelter-in-Place.

## Shelter-in-Place Procedures:

1. Decide if you should Shelter-in-Place or evacuate.
2. Call 911 and report the emergency.
3. Follow your emergency plan.
4. Tape around doors, windows, and vents or place wet towels at bottom of door to keep fumes/gases out.
5. Turn off heating and air conditioners and/or exhaust fans. Leave the electricity on. Arlington Alert, televisions and radios may be used for getting information during the event.



# EVACUATION

The following are examples of emergencies or threats in which the preferred response might be to evacuate a building in order to mitigate exposure to the risk.

- an internal chemical spill or gas leak
- visible smoke, vapor cloud, or fire (inside the building)
- bomb threat (do not utilize cell phones)
- suspicious mail

## Evacuation Procedures:

1. **DO NOT PANIC**—remain calm.
2. **DO NOT RUN.**
3. **DO NOT OPEN HOT DOORS**—before opening any door, touch it near top to see if it is hot.
4. **DO NOT USE ELEVATORS.**
5. **DO NOT BREAK WINDOWS** - oxygen feeds fires
6. **DO NOT ASSIST FIRE-FIGHTING PERSONNEL** unless asked to do so.
7. **DO NOT BE A SPECTATOR**—head away from problem area, to your safe area. Remain in this area until instructed to return or relocate.



## WEATHER EMERGENCIES

**After any severe weather event passes be alert for fallen electrical wires.**

### LIGHTNING STORMS

It is recommended that when lightning is visible and 6 miles away (30 seconds between the flash and the thunder), people outside should seek appropriate cover. Remember that it does not have to be raining or even cloudy for lightning to strike.

#### **A safe structure is:**

- A typical building that has plumbing or electrical wiring. Pipes and wiring act to ground the structure.
- When an appropriate building cannot be accessed, a vehicle may be used. The vehicle should have a hard metal top. The windows should be rolled up and occupants should avoid touching the sides of the vehicle.

#### **If a safe structure cannot be located and you are caught out in the open:**

- Stay away from the tallest objects in the area, such as trees or flagpoles.
- Stay away from metal objects such as bleachers or fences.
- Stay away from standing pools or bodies of water.
- Crouch down with only the balls of the feet touching the ground. Wrap your arms around your knees and lower your head. Do not lie flat on the ground.



Avoid using a cell phone or land-line telephone during a storm involving lightning. The electric current can travel through phone lines. People should also avoid using the shower or plumbing facilities during this time.

Outdoor activities should be curtailed until 30 minutes have passed since the last thunder or lightning.

## **TORNADO WATCH / TORNADO WARNING**

A tornado watch means conditions are right for a tornado to occur. There is no immediate action to take but you should keep an eye on the skies and be prepared in the event a warning is issued.

A tornado warning means a tornado is occurring in or around Arlington County. Immediate action is required to prevent injury, death and/or property damage.

If you are outside during a tornado warning find shelter immediately.

If you are inside, seek a place of refuge such as a basement or shelter area.

- The sheltering areas should be away from windows and other glassed areas.
- When using hallways as refuge areas, stay out of the path of swinging doors.



## SUSPICIOUS PERSON/INTRUDER

### **1 Suspicious activity in your neighborhood may consist of:**

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- A stranger around your neighbor's house or a strange vehicle parked near your neighbor's home.
- The sound of breaking glass.
- Anyone peering into vehicles or removing tags, gasoline, or auto parts.

If you see suspicious activity – call the Police Non-Emergency number 703-558-2222. You do not have to leave your name.

### **2 Intruder in your Home: If you return home and believe someone may have broken in while you were away:**

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- Leave immediately! Do not enter your home!
- Go to a neighbor's house or some other location and call the Arlington County Police Department at 911.
- Wait for the police; **do not return** to your home until the officers have checked it.



## **FIRE**

- 1 Exit the building as quickly as possible.**
- 2 Stay low in smoke.**
- 3 Use a wet cloth to cover your nose and mouth.**
- 4 Use the back of your hand to feel the lower, middle, and upper parts of closed doors.**
- 5 If the door is not hot, brace yourself against the door and open it slowly.**
- 6 Do not open the door if it is hot.  
Look for another way out.**
- 7 Never use elevators. Use your designated exits.**
- 8 If you catch on fire, do not run!**
- 9 Stop, Drop and Roll.**
- 10 Go to previously designated meeting place.**
- 11 Account for your family members.**
- 12 Never go back into a burning building.**
- 13 Carefully supervise small children.**
- 14 Call the Arlington County Fire Department at 911.**



## HAZARDOUS MATERIALS

Hazardous materials are defined as materials or substances that pose a risk to the safety and health of the community or environment when released from their containers. Some examples of hazardous materials are: **spilled chemicals, leaking compressed gas, poison release and unrecognized pungent odors.**

1. If you suspect a harmful substance has been released or spilled, do not attempt to clean it up yourself. Secure the area around the substance and leave the area.
2. **Contact the Arlington County Fire Department at 911** and provide as much information as possible concerning the incident and/or substance involved. This should include visible container(s), odor(s) if any, description of materials(s), and the exact location of the release.
3. **DO NOT touch, move, or purposely smell any suspected hazardous material.**
4. The Arlington County Fire Department HAZMAT Team will attempt to further assist in identification of the substance, decide if further evacuation is necessary and issue an “all clear” signal when completed.



## SUSPICIOUS PACKAGE/MAIL

A suspicious letter/package/parcel could contain any of the following:

Foreign mail	Airmail	No return address
Misspelling of common words	Poorly typed addresses	Protruding wires or tin foil
Excessive postage	Restrictive markings	Titles, but no names
Handwritten messages	Incorrect titles	Rigid envelopes, bulky
Packages with odd noises	Lopsided or uneven envelope	Excessive securing material (i.e. tape)
Special delivery	Excessive weight	Oily stains/ Discoloration/odor

- 1 If any of the items listed above are identified on a package, do not open the package. Secure the area around the item.
- 2 Contact the Arlington County Police Department at 911.
- 3 The person who identified the suspicious package should not “broadcast” the matter and cause panic, but contact the building supervisor(s) giving as much detail about the situation as possible.
- 4 The Arlington County Police and Arlington County Fire Department will evaluate the situation and they will decide if the package is a threat. They will then inform the resident(s) of the proper course of action to take.



## BIOLOGICAL THREAT

- 1 A biological attack is the release of germs or other biological substances. Many agents must be inhaled, enter through a cut in the skin or be eaten to make you sick. Some biological agents can cause contagious diseases others do not.
- 2 A biological attack may or may not be immediately obvious. While it is possible that you will see signs of a biological attack it is perhaps more likely that local health care workers will report a pattern of unusual illness.
- 3 You will probably learn of the danger through 1700 AM Arlington emergency radio or TV broadcast.
- 4 If you become aware of an unusual or suspicious release of an unknown substance nearby, it doesn't hurt to protect yourself.
- 5 Get away from the substance as quickly as possible.
- 6 Cover your mouth and nose with layers of fabric that can filter the air but still allow breathing.
- 7 Wash with soap and water and contact authorities.
- 8 In the event of a biological attack, public health officials may not immediately be able to provide information on what you should do. However, you should listen to 1700 AM Arlington, watch the local media or check the Internet for official news as it becomes available.
- 9 At the time of a declared biological emergency be suspicious, but do not automatically assume that any illness is the result of the attack. Symptoms of many common illnesses may overlap. Use commonsense, practice good hygiene and cleanliness to avoid spreading germs, and seek medical advice.



## CHEMICAL THREAT

- 1 A chemical attack is the deliberate release of a toxic gas, liquid or solid that can poison people and the environment.
- 2 Watch for signs such as many people suffering from watery eyes, twitching, choking, having trouble breathing or losing coordination.
- 3 Take immediate action to get away from any sign of a chemical attack.
- 4 If the chemical is inside a building where you are, try to get out of the building without passing through the contaminated area, if possible.
- 5 Otherwise, it may be better to move as far away from where you suspect the chemical release is and shelter-in-place.
- 6 If you are outside when you see signs of a chemical attack, you must quickly decide the fastest way to get away from the chemical threat.
- 7 Consider if you can get out of the area or if it would be better to go inside a building and follow your plan to shelter-in-place.
- 8 If your eyes are watering, your skin is stinging, you are having trouble breathing or you simply think you may have been exposed to a chemical, immediately strip and wash. Look for a hose, fountain, or any source of water.
- 9 Wash with soap and water, if possible, but do not scrub the chemical into your skin.
- 10 Seek emergency medical attention by calling the Arlington County Fire Department paramedics at 911.



## **RADIATION THREAT**

- 1 A radiation threat or “Dirty Bomb” is the use of common explosives to spread radioactive materials.**
- 2 It is not a nuclear blast. The force of the explosion and radioactive contamination will be more localized. In order to limit the amount of radiation you are exposed to, think about shielding, distance and time.**
- 3 Shielding: If you have a thick shield between yourself and the radioactive materials more of the radiation will be absorbed by the thick shield, and you will be exposed to less.**
- 4 Distance: The farther away you are from the radiation the lower your exposure.**
- 5 Time: Minimizing time spent exposed will also reduce your risk.**
- 6 Arlington County will attempt to provide information. If you are far from the blast, you should tune to 1700 AM Arlington, watch the local media, including Channel 74. Check the internet at [www.arlingtonva.us](http://www.arlingtonva.us) to get up to date emergency information. You will be instructed to either shelter-in-place or evacuate.**